

CIA-RDP79T01019A000100100001-8

**Cocos Island**

**Status:** Uninhabited island in the Pacific Ocean, belonging to Costa Rica

**Location:** 5°32' N, 87°04'W  
300 miles west of Osa Peninsula, southern Costa Rica  
Off of the main shipping lanes

**Topography:** A lava mantle, sharply dissected into rugged terrain.  
Highest mountain on western end: Mt. Iglesias, 2,530 feet.  
Cliffs 200-600 ft. high around 3/4 of the coast; many vertical.  
Good sandy beach 300 ft. wide, 1/4 mile long at Wafer Bay

**Vegetation and water supply:** Dense tropical vegetation with heavy undergrowth. Coconuts are common.  
Grasses grow 6-8 ft. high, edges sharp enough to cut.  
Precipitation heavy all year. Numerous streams provide constant supply of good water. Many waterfalls, tallest 400 ft. high.  
**Climate:** Dry season Jan-Mar and Sept-Oct. Temp Mild. Prevailing winds S-SW.  
**Soils:** Volcanic origin. Thin on steep slopes but pockets of good soil are suitable for crops

**Animal life:** No mosquitoes or poisonous snakes.  
Numerous wild hogs and goats, result of early colonization project.  
Deer, wild cats, many birds.  
A pair of monkeys were turned loose on the island in 1954.  
Rats, formerly reported as bothersome, later non-existent.  
Probably killed off by wild cats.

**Economic resources:** Some coal beds in Mt. Iglesias.  
Some grassy areas have been proposed for cattle raising.  
Good soils  
Colonization effort, 1894-1910, raised coffee, bananas, corn, yuca, tobacco - at Wafer Bay.

**Anchorage:** Best at Chatham Bay, but there is no level land on shore.  
Good beach and level land on shore behind Wafer Bay but anchorage there does not hold well.

**Movement ashore:** Difficult because of steep slopes and cliffs, and the sharp grasses and dense undergrowth.  
Best routes along stream courses.

**Historical development:** Known since early 1500's, and used by pirates/and whaling vessels from then on.

Colonization project began in 1894; lasted for 16 years.  
Penal colony project attempted a few years later but failed.  
Efforts in 1950's by Americans to set up a Tourist center was turned down by the Costan Rican government because of supply problems.

Continuous efforts for decades by professional and amateur treasure hunters; all with no luck. Costa Rican government requires that any loot is to be divided 50-50 with government.

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Numerous scientific expeditions have visited the island.

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